

ANARCHIST LABOR BULLETIN

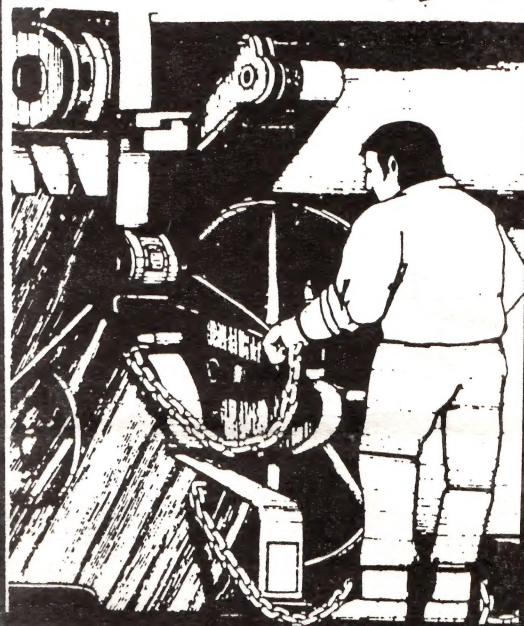
Formerly The Seditonist

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75c

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Anarchist Labor Network

ORGANIZE the UNORGANIZED



I HATE WORK!

Work, Anti-Work and Workers Control

I have always hated work. I used to think this was due to the fact that I was always doing ridiculous and shitty jobs. I imagined that if I could find THE RIGHT job, a rewarding and satisfying "career", then I could learn to enjoy going to work every morning. It was only after experiencing the monotony of doing something I liked and thought useful for forty hours per week that I discovered something haywire in the whole system. Here I was, doing something worthwhile (helping the handicapped) and getting paid for it, but at the same time I felt used and exploited, just like when I was washing dishes, sweeping floors, loading railroad cars and shampooing carpets. What was the problem? Low wages? That was part

of it. The most useful tasks in society always seem to pay the least. Subordinate relationships? Yes, that was part of it too. But I have become so used to considering myself the equal of any living human being that such things as feeling "subordinate" don't really enter into it. It was a vast web of circumstances that made me dissatisfied, a web that spread out to include the entire system of social relationships fostered by American society, and capitalism (in all it's forms) in general.

Simply switching from capitalism to socialism, while maintaining the same social relationships, obviously won't improve matters. Giving the bosses another name does

not change the nature of a boss any more than electing a president from another party changes the nature of the presidency. On this point I believe I am in agreement with the "anti-work" faction: the nature of work, and society in general, needs to be changed. Wage labor, forced labor, monotony, subservience; I'm completely against them all. I am against wasting 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week toiling to make some rich asshole richer still. So where is the conflict? I have certainly read no essays or articles by anti-work advocates promoting any of the above. The conflict is in HOW the nature of work (and society) is to be changed.

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Miners Occupy Plant

On September 17th at 4pm two large trucks stopped in front of the Pittston Coal Company's Moss 3 preparation plant in Carbo, Virginia. Their rear doors opened and 98 miners dressed in camouflaged fatigues poured out. The miners marched quickly past the blue-uniformed Vance Security Assets Protection Team (company goons) and occupied Moss 3. The security people, surprised and out-numbered, fled the plant.

Within minutes a group of 200 other striking miners and supporters had positioned themselves in front of the plant gates, blocking them and preventing the state police from

going inside. By nightfall the number of people outside the gates had grown to 2000.

For the next three days the miners held the plant. They brought in provisions, they checked cars entering or leaving the vicinity and they organized their supporters who continued to camp outside the plant, preventing the police from entering. At 9:30 pm on September 20th, hours after a federal judge ordered them to leave the plant, more than 5000 people rallied outside Moss 3. Then, as quickly as they'd come, the 98 miners marched out of the plant and melted into the crowd, avoiding arrest.

The occupation of Moss 3 is arguably the most important development in the 6 month strike of the United Mine Workers against the Pittston Coal Company. The indication by UMW leaders that it marks a change in tactics, and that more occupations will follow, has reinvigorated the strikers and their supporters. Also, for the 3 days the plant was occupied, Pittston's coal production was completely stopped. But beyond these things, the occupation of the Moss 3 plant brings the striking miners one step closer to the one tactic that would assure their victory: the

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occupation and operation of the mines by the workers themselves. It's a cinch that the UMW leadership, the usual collection of professional bureaucrats, compromisers and politicians that rise to the top of the business unions, won't knowingly let the strike go on to this conclusion. Their actions during the strike have already made this clear. Their refusal to sanction the solidarity strikes by tens of thousands of other miners constituted one of the most embarrassing and unforgiveable moments in the history of organized labor. These bureaucrats will never "lead" the UMW, the UAW, IAM, UFW or any other union to a real victory. They are too concerned with maintaining their own positions within the familiar structure of the business unions. The one purpose the bureaucrats COULD serve is to lead the business unions to the breaking point (which is what has happened in the Pittston struggle and the struggle at Eastern Airlines) where the workers involved are presented with two choices: accept defeat within the capitalist system, or carry the struggle on to another level. There are rumblings of this advance to a higher level

of struggle throughout the labor movement. The words "General Strike" are appearing in business union publications. This is, I believe, a reflection of discussion on the shop floor and the bureaucrats attempts to co-opt and control that discussion. After all, it's becoming pretty apparent that capital (as in Pittston Coal and Eastern Airlines) can count on the full support of the State (courts, NLRB, politicians, police) in their efforts against the working class. What weapons do we have? We have the strike, but strikes that try to function within the legal framework of capitalist law are dead on arrival. We lose even if we win. The only strike we can REALLY win is the general strike, and then ONLY if we carry it through to it's natural conclusion: the destruction of the state and the initiation of workers control. The creation of free socialism.

If the miners occupy the coal mines of Virginia we are one step closer to that goal.

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2 days before being harvested. It is illegal to use this pesticide 30 days before harvest but no one checks. These trees are subject to aphids bigtime so to insure maximum profit the trees are sprayed. Mexicans spray the trees and are exposed, they then load them and I help unload several tractor trailers full. Certainly not all of the trees are sprayed with the pesticide because white pines make up only a small portion of sales, yet they still amount to hundreds of trees.

We had the same problem last year: no rights, hard work and \$5.00 an hour. Worker organization will be extremely difficult here because temporary workers could fulfill all our tasks easily. There is no shortage of poor people here.

I would like to have tests made by the state regulatory agencies on tainted materials but past experience has shown that the state does not enthusiastically support it's own rules. I'll write back and inform you of goings on.

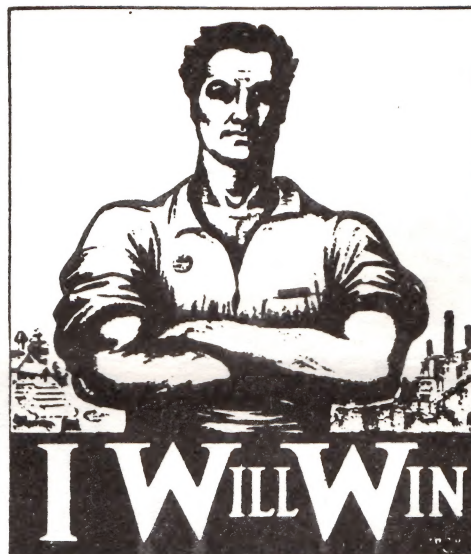
Art Decco
BOX 12504
Raleigh, NC 27605

IWW ORGANIZER CONVICTED IN KANGAROO COURT

IWW prison organizer John Perotti has been wrongfully convicted of stabbing another prisoner in the Southwest Ohio Correctional Facility in Lucasville, Ohio. In a trial characterized by judicial and prosecutorial misconduct and prejudice, Fellow Worker Perotti provided ample evidence that he did not stab the other prisoner (a snitch known for working with the prison administration). In addition to this evidence, yet another prisoner, the snitch's lover, ADMITTED TO THE CRIME! Still, the forces of the state, in flagrant violation of common sense, decency and the "law", convicted and sentenced FW Perotti to 12-15 more years in prison.

John has been active in trying to organize the prison workers (as state employees) for the Industrial Workers of the World.

He has also been involved in exposing abuse and rights violations behind the prison walls. He is a valued comrade and deserves our support in this hour of struggle. Due to the obvious misconduct of his trial, the chances of winning an appeal are excellent (after all, another inmate actually admitted to the crime!). But, in this "land of freedom", justice COSTS MONEY. If you can't come up with the money, you get NO JUSTICE. We urge you to send monetary support in whatever amount you can afford (an estimated \$3000 is needed within the next 60 days to launch the appeal) to: Perotti Defense Fund, 1142 Hall Ave., Lakewood, Ohio, 44107 USA. Letters of support should be sent to: John Perotti, SOCF 167712, POB 45699, Lucasville, OH 45699-0001



WORK continued

Anti-work advocates propose that the best way to change the nature of work is to JUST STOP WORKING. This, in essence, is a call for a GENERAL STRIKE, something that I would heartily support! Anarcho-syndicalists have always advocated the GENERAL STRIKE (or a series of GENERAL STRIKES) as a necessary prelude to social revolution. So, again, the anti-work advocates are proposing something that I, as an anarcho-syndicalist, can completely support. But the question remains, how is this GENERAL STRIKE to come

about? The only way for a GENERAL STRIKE to be effective, or to be a GENERAL STRIKE at all, is for workers to stop working EN MASSE. This would require coordination, communication and unity of action, in other words: ORGANIZATION. People will not stop eating when they stop working for the capitalists, any more than they will stop wanting to sleep indoors. How would the anti-work advocates, who are equally anti-organization, get around this need for unity and collective action? By doing it piece-meal. By individuals "dropping out" of the work force until, I presume, no one is left to

work for boss. How practical is this? These individual workers who "drop out" will be faced with the two alternatives that currently present themselves to workers: self-employment within capitalism or subsistence on welfare. Self-employment within capitalism is a pretty dicey proposition. Over 90% of all small businesses fail in the first year, and those 10% that succeed find themselves in the position of being more tied to the whims of capitalism than wage workers. In effect they cut out the middle (management) man and deal directly with capital itself: they

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WORKPLACE ORGANIZING: SOME COMMENTS

I would briefly like to comment on the five-step article on the above subject which appeared in the last issue (#13) of the ANARCHIST LABOR BULLETIN.

Workplace organizing is one of the pillars of anarchist unionism. It is in the workplace that we spend much of our waking time, where we make friends, develop social relations, practice our skills, trade or simply grin and bear a job we hate. And the workplace is also the place where we tend to see our class oppression the most.

It's at the workplace, more often than not, where we workers tend to take a stand against being pushed around. It is here where we try to organize against not only economic oppression, but also racial and sexual oppression as well. Our forms of organization will be many and should not simply be limited to that of organizing into a trade union, but other forms of working class organization as well (revolutionary unions, workplace associations, workers councils to name a few).

The question, in my mind, is not what type of organization per se that we choose to organize (as long as they're not bureaucratic and hierarchical formations) but, rather, the "steps" taken in the organizational process. The steps that are taken, more often than not, will significantly be a reflection of the type of organization that we are trying to build.

This is, or should be, the main question in our minds when we

begin the process of starting to help organize our unorganized co-workers.

If we, as anarchist unionists, are going to organize militant, independent and mass unions (or whatever name you choose) then the conceptual framework from which we start should be along those lines. Yet we are confronted with the reality that, although there are larger, long range goals in mind, that our form of unionism must also provide for the immediate needs of co-workers as well. This can sometimes be a dilemma--but only if we let it.

I think that Mike K. sincerely and honestly wants to combine the two factors in his organizational work, but has been confronted with the last problem and the problem of having the organization become a "legitimate" organization of his co-workers. Knowing Mike I believe that he is doing what he thinks is right and proper, or maybe he is just "feeling his way around" trying to find what will work.

I think it's possible to combine our goals of providing for the immediate satisfaction of our co-workers needs while educating our co-workers to the long range goals at the same time. And during an organizational campaign as well.

How? First of all I think workers must start out with the premise that the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and other government agencies are stacked, at best, against workers. And as anarchists we surely should be

clear that workers get no relief from the State.

I would strongly suggest that workers are truly prepared to organize militant, independent unionism when they are willing to by-pass the NLRB. This will take a lot of education on the militant's part. Or else your co-workers will be militant enough to understand the role of the NLRB and be willing to take the boss on without going through an NLRB supervised election.

With a recognition that it will take only good, solid and militant organization to get the boss to negotiate with your organization the workers have seen what they can do on their own and through an organization that is willing to take direct action to achieve it's goals. This in turn begins to "satisfy" some of our own criteria for building the type of labor movement that will be truly militant, self-managed and direct actionist in orientation and philosophy.

Not to belabor the point, but the little blurb on the Cox Creek United Electrical Workers victory failed to mention that their battle for union recognition was waged WITHOUT seeking an NLRB sponsored election. They struck for union recognition, plain and simple.

Lastly, in terms of federal labor law, I do think that militants should be aware of what's out there and changes in those laws. Whether we like it or not, sooner or later we may have to face such laws and may

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You, me and the VDT

The California Occupational Health and Safety Administration (CAL-OSHA) has once again proven itself to be THE BEST FRIEND BIG BUSINESS EVER HAD.

Despite an overwhelming amount of evidence testifying to the dangers of Video Display Terminals, CAL-OSHA has stated in a report issued in May that "more research is needed" before State regulations can be put in place. In the meantime, office workers will continue to suffer eye strain, stress, severe headaches and miscarriages; AND EMPLOYERS WILL CONTINUE TO STUFF THEIR POCKETS WITH BLOOD-STAINED WADS OF MONEY.

As a counter-point to CAL-OSHA's disgusting claim of insufficient evidence, a study conducted by Kaiser Permanente (one of California's largest health care providers) concluded that pregnant women who work at VDTs are 50% more likely to suffer miscarriages than non-VDT workers.

It is no coincidence that the CAL-OSHA committee conducting their study included representatives of the IBM Corporation (3) the Hewlett-Packard Corporation (2) as well as several military representatives, and ONLY TWO people from organized labor (Larkie Gildersleeve of the Northern California Newspaper Guild and Kathleen Kinnick of the AFL-CIO). The outcome of the study was, needless to say, a foregone conclusion.

It should be very clear to us all that we will GET NO HELP FROM THE STATE, and we will get no help from the AFL-CIO (who can't imagine a world without a State). We can only help ourselves. The time has come to TAKE OUR GRIEVANCES INTO THE STREETS!

Selected excerpts from Cal-OSHA's report can be obtained from the Anarchist Labor Network for \$1.00 (postage and copying costs)



use some of them for defensive purposes (such as unfair labor practice strikes).

During the course of your organizing, with the recognition that you will by-pass the NLRB, a constant "shop-floor" fight should be waged as well.

What does this mean? It means that you will already know what the grievances are. It means that you will already have some goals already stated and it means that you will already have the organizational wheels turning. It means that one should not wait for the boss to officially recognize your union and be bargaining a contract (if a collective bargaining agreement is your goal). It

means for you and your co-workers to be fighting to satisfy your grievances in the here and now.

It means that once you reach the state of being organized you should try to force the boss to grant concessions. It means forcing the boss, through your numbers and strength, to recognize your directly elected representatives and committee (s). It simply means acting "union" even if your boss doesn't recognize your union.

All of the above (and countless other examples) means that it is possible to move an organizational campaign from a strictly business unionist approach to a more radical militant one. It provides us, as

anarchist unionists, with the outlets by which our educational efforts are made easier. It provides practical ways of enhancing militancy and self-organization and it allows all of the contradictions between the classes to play itself out in a real way.

At this point I will end this piece, although there are other issues raised in Mike's piece that I would like to address.

I'd like to thank Mike for sharing his thoughts and for getting, as he so nicely put it, "the creative juices flowing".

Mike Harris, NY WSA

ORGANIZING UPDATE

IWW: Current organizing activities in the Bay Area include non-profit workers and messengers. Both projects are currently underway. The messengers, who already exist as a semi-organized industrial group, are a good possibility. We hope to present a longer report in a future issue of the ALB.

OWU: Office Workers United organizing efforts are continuing at a steady pace. Agitation and flier distribution in the financial district are regular events. Interest by groups outside the Bay Area (Baltimore and San Diego) is increasing. More information will be available in future issues of the ALB.

IMWU: New locals reported in San Francisco (see directory) and Memphis, TN. (address next issue. Report from Manila next issue.

WSA: The WSA East Tennessee Group announces the opening of a coffee house and bookstore. See Directory for contact address.

Creation of Sex Trade Workers Industrial Union 690

Given that it is the goal of the IWW to lend solidarity and support to all people who are not members of the employing class.

And given that it is no more the business of this union to pass judgement on its members sexual activity than on their political or religious beliefs.

And given that the IWW has always been open to many trades which individual members may wish to see ended or fundamentally changed, such as munitions, nuclear or luxury product workers.

And given that the IWW has consistently been the first labour organization in North America to organize workers whose labour is not respected, such as migrants, homemakers and prisoners.

And given that millions of predominantly female workers are struggling against the violence of poverty, racism, sexism, unwanted pimps (both individual and state-sponsored), police brutality and social ostracism, without any relief from workers outside their trade and very little from within.

And given that there exists substantial bodies of these workers, particularly those underage or with families to support, who experience numerous barriers when attempting other employment; and that these people would clearly stand to benefit from the freedom of choice that could only be won through the militant self-organization of sex trade workers.

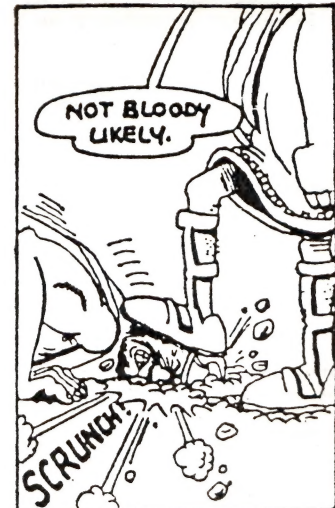
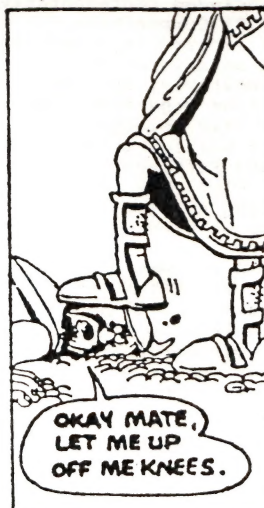
And given that the IWW would take special pains not to be felt as a competing pressure on existing sex trade associations; but rather, as an extension of resources in solidarity, with the expectation of dual members in exactly the manner as we have come to expect with other labour organizations

Therefore, the IWW shall immediately add to its Public Service Department a Sex Trade Workers Industrial Union specifically to address the extraordinary needs of all members employed as dancers and models, telephone sex workers, hookers, hustlers, escorts, non-contact sex workers, actors, and all other workers who use sexuality as the primary tool of their trade. Excluded from this are all agents of the boss class who are able to hire or fire, or possess the equivalent coercive or punitive power.

Calender

OCTOBER 20th

THE COORDINADORA: Spanish Anarcho-syndicalist dockworkers union. Slide presentation by Don Fitz of Workers Democracy who has recently returned from Spain. Program sponsored by Workers Solidarity Alliance. 7:00 PM, Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center, 515 Cortland Ave., San Francisco. Donation.



Murray Ball.

WORK continued

BECOME capital on a small scale. Never mind the fact that most people I know who own their own businesses WORK HARDER than I EVER want to.

As for the second option, subsistence on welfare, that is no option at all. Any one who would propose it as a positive alternative to wage labor has either never been on welfare, or else has had a markedly different experience with the welfare system than most of us. The welfare system, like the prison system, is designed to make ANY wage labor, no matter how menial or disgusting, seem attractive. After I was on the dole for a few months I would've gladly taken a job shoveling toxic waste in my shirt sleeves just to get out of their clutches. Others I have talked to felt the same way. In any case, voluntarily entering the social services system amounts to self-imposed poverty (at the mercy of the whims of capital) and as such is even less practical or attractive than self-employment.

A third alternative (that falls somewhere between the above two) is scavenging. This includes dumpster diving, squatting, and various low-level forms of self-employment (collecting aluminum, begging, petty theft, etc.). But even in most of these situations, where people have collectively occupied some abandoned building, you will find some people working for the minimum wage at the bottom end of the capitalist pyramid and some people on social services. They are still at the mercy of capital, and even more at the mercy of the capitalist police, who make periodic sweeps to "reclaim" the occupied buildings for their absentee landlords. Another instance of self-imposed poverty that allows capital to continue on unchecked.

So what do I propose as an alternative to the above strategies? I propose that we, the workers, organize ourselves for the task of seizing society and

changing the nature of work. I pose the question: what would hurt capital more? Abandoning the workplace to scabs and robots, or OCCUPYING THE WORKPLACE and grabbing capitalism by the balls? Needless to say, the answer is clear, at least to me. On the day that all the dishwashers, clerks, bus drivers, assembly line workers, teachers, students, laborers and janitors throw down their tools and say ENOUGH, that day will be the first day of the FREE SOCIETY. To prepare for that day we have to work with our brothers and sisters, demonstrate the possibilities of self-management, expose the uselessness of the ruling class, instill the self-confidence and determination that will eventually create that free society. To do that we need to organize socially, in the community and in the workplace, to get people used to the freedom of making the BIG DECISIONS for themselves. If that means we're "workerists" (as in "an advocate of the workers") then so be it: I'm as proud to be a "workerist" as I am to be a worker, and one day we will rise.

Mike Kolhoff, SF WSA

Letters

Dear Friends and Comrades:

Greetings! I was very glad to hear that comrades were agreeable to the idea of forming a non-sectarian Anarchist Labor Network and publishing the "Anarchist Labor Bulletin". For what it's worth, I think that it's high time that comrades who share similar ideas and are engaged in workers struggle begin to share those ideas, views, news and actions with others in a practical and non-sectarian fashion.

Although we comprise a small section of the anarchist movement, many of our activities seem to be greater than our actual numbers. This is obviously good but we should not stop here. I am not of the opinion that our broad agitational activities should be limited to the anarchist movement. Experience has taught me that this is self-limiting and not always productive. Yet we all share a basic common thread: our belief that the class struggle is primary and our desire to get across anarcho-syndicalist ideas.

Regardless of what organization we may or may not belong to I would hope that this project will help us in coordinating anarchist class struggle activities, provide a forum for ideas that other publications have not been able to provide, and to provide all of us with an avenue to discuss the issues of the day. And, yes, to even debate what anarcho-syndicalism means in a real and practical sense, based on current activity and the incorporation of the theoretical aspects as well. As we begin to see the class struggle heat up more and more, I think that our ideas and activities will take on

increased meaning and relevance. As more and more workers begin to see the limiting nature of trade union struggle, it's imperative that all our diverse anarcho-syndicalist comrades make available the broad ideas of anarcho-syndicalism and the practical comments, suggestions and methods that emanate from anarcho-syndicalism. Our ideas will only make sense when they are rooted in the PRACTICAL application of those ideas, and not with fine sounding rhetoric and biting sectarianism.

If there is a recognition that it IS possible to get this message across, then it's up to all of us, collectively, to do so in a way that all diverse can partake. I am interested in others opinions as to how to make this work.

Lastly, I would hope that through the pages of the ALB we will see reports on comrades activities as well as a good blend of local, national and international coverage from an anarchist unionist perspective.

In solidarity,
Mike Harris
NY WSA

Dear Mike and ALN:

I'm glad you remembered me! The workplace toxins issue is always relevant to me because I'm always surrounded by them. The nursery industry is becoming very big here in North Carolina, and the export to other regions is increasing. We have this industry for the same reason that we had tobacco and cotton before it: cheap manual labor. Both nursery and tobacco require large amounts of minimum wage (or less) labor to make them very profitable, so they use blacks (or now Mexican Americans). Mexicans will work hard as hell for \$3.35, so hard that other people cannot keep up. Blacks here will not do this

kind of work anymore, except way out in the country. They pretty much refuse to do things that look like slave work. So now I work at a retail garden center that raises no plants but buys them and resells them. A monument to capital. We (the workers) have no idea what is on these plants (growth hormone, herbicide, pesticide, fertilizer) or what the company sprays to keep them fresh in the center itself. Only salaried, highly paid workers spray at the actual garden center. A short time ago one worker was told not to handle certain plants too much because they were sprayed with pesticide earlier in the day. This worker had already handled the plants and had no choice but to continue handling them if he was to perform his job.

So what I was concerned about was when the Christmas trees came in because I was told by the son of a grower that white pine trees are illegally sprayed with a very dangerous pesticide

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IMWU Directory cont. pg. 5

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• Lowell May, 2201 Eliot, Denver, 80211, tel. (303) 458-0870
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Chicago 60657, tel. (312) 549-5045. Meetings 7:30 pm, first Friday of each month. •
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LOUISVILLE. Shreveport Group, Box 37581, Shreveport 71133.
MARYLAND. Baltimore Branch, 1045 Hollins Ave., Baltimore 21223. Regional organizing
committee, Rt 1, Box 137A, Arvon, VA 23004.
MASSACHUSETTS. Boston Branch, Box 454, Cambridge 02139, tel. (617) 469-5162.
• Berkshire Learning Center Job Branch, 35 Curtis Terrace, Pittsfield 01201
• Barry Roderick, Box 213, Cambridge 02139.
MICHIGAN. Southeast MI Branch, 42 South Summit, Ypsilanti 48197, tel. (313) 483-3478
• People's Warehouse Job Branch, 727 West Ellsworth Rd, Ann Arbor 48104
• Grand Rapids Group, Box 211, Comstock Park 49321
• Ann Arbor Tenants' Union, 4001 Michigan Union, Ann Arbor 48109, tel. (313) 763-6876.
MINNESOTA. Minneapolis-St. Paul Branch (Nancy Collins, del.): Box 2245, St. Paul
55102. Meetings third Wednesday of each month.
MONTANA. Western Montana Branch, 415 N. Higgins, Room 104, Missoula. Open Mon
through Sat, 12-5. (800) 473-4000 or (406) 721-3000. A.L. Nurse, delegate. Correspondance
to Box 8562, Missoula 59807.
NEW YORK. New York Branch, Box 183, New York 10028. Meetings second Sunday of
each month at 2 pm. Call Rochelle, Jackie, or John for location of meetings.
• Rochelle Semel, Box 172, Fly Creek 13337, tel. (607) 293-6489.
• D. Saz, (212) 666-7484
• Jackie Panish, Box 372, Rego Park 11374, tel. (212) 868-1121
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